

105TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 568

To secure the voting rights of former felons who have been released from incarceration.

---

## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 4, 1997

Mr. CONYERS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the  
Committee on the Judiciary

---

## A BILL

To secure the voting rights of former felons who have been  
released from incarceration.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Voting Rights of  
5       Former Offenders Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. RIGHTS OF CITIZENS.**

7       The right of a citizen of the United States, who other-  
8       wise is qualified, to vote in any election for Federal office  
9       shall not be denied or abridged because he has committed  
10      a criminal offense unless such citizen is imprisoned in a

1 correctional institution or facility at the time of such elec-  
2 tion.

3 **SEC. 3. STATE REQUIREMENTS.**

4 Nothing in this Act shall be construed to prohibit the  
5 States from establishing requirements for the holding of  
6 State or local elective office; nor from enacting any State  
7 law which affords the right to vote in any election for Fed-  
8 eral office on terms less restrictive than those established  
9 by this Act.

10 **SEC. 4. OFFENSE.**

11 Whoever intentionally denies or attempts to deny any  
12 person any right secured by this Act shall be fined under  
13 title 18, United States Code, or imprisoned not more than  
14 one year, or both.

15 **SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.**

16 For purposes of this Act—

17 (1) the term “correctional institution or facil-  
18 ity” means any prison, penitentiary, jail, or other in-  
19 stitution or facility for the confinement of individ-  
20 uals convicted of criminal offenses, except that such  
21 term does not include any residential community  
22 treatment center (or similar public or private facil-  
23 ity);

24 (2) the term “election” means (A) a general,  
25 special, primary, or runoff election, (B) a convention

1 or caucus of a political party held to nominate a  
2 candidate, (C) a primary election held for the selec-  
3 tion of delegates to a national nominating conven-  
4 tion of a political party, or (D) a primary election  
5 held for the expression of a preference for the nomi-  
6 nation of persons for election to the office of Presi-  
7 dent; and

8 (3) the term “Federal office” means the office  
9 of President or Vice President of the United States,  
10 or of Senator or Representative in, or Delegate or  
11 Resident Commissioner to, the Congress of the  
12 United States.

○